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Do I have a
chronic cough?

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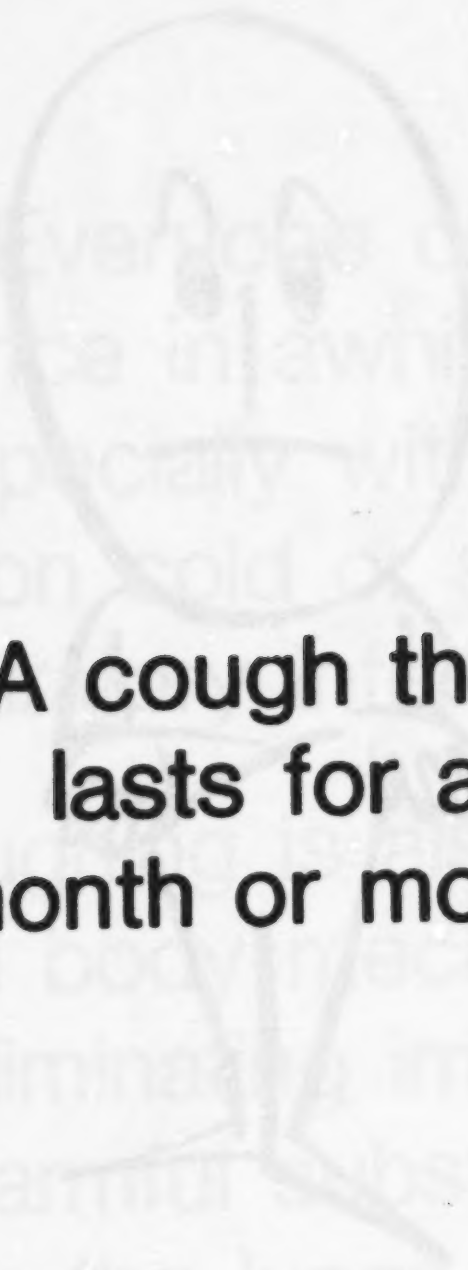
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The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute plans, conducts, and supports a national program of research investigations into the causes, prevention, diagnosis and treatment of heart, blood vessel, lung, and blood diseases.

Within the NHLBI, the Division of Lung Diseases supports and conducts research activities on normal lung functions and on certain chronic lung diseases including emphysema, chronic bronchitis, asthma, cystic fibrosis, and dust inhalation diseases.



**What is a
Chronic Cough?**



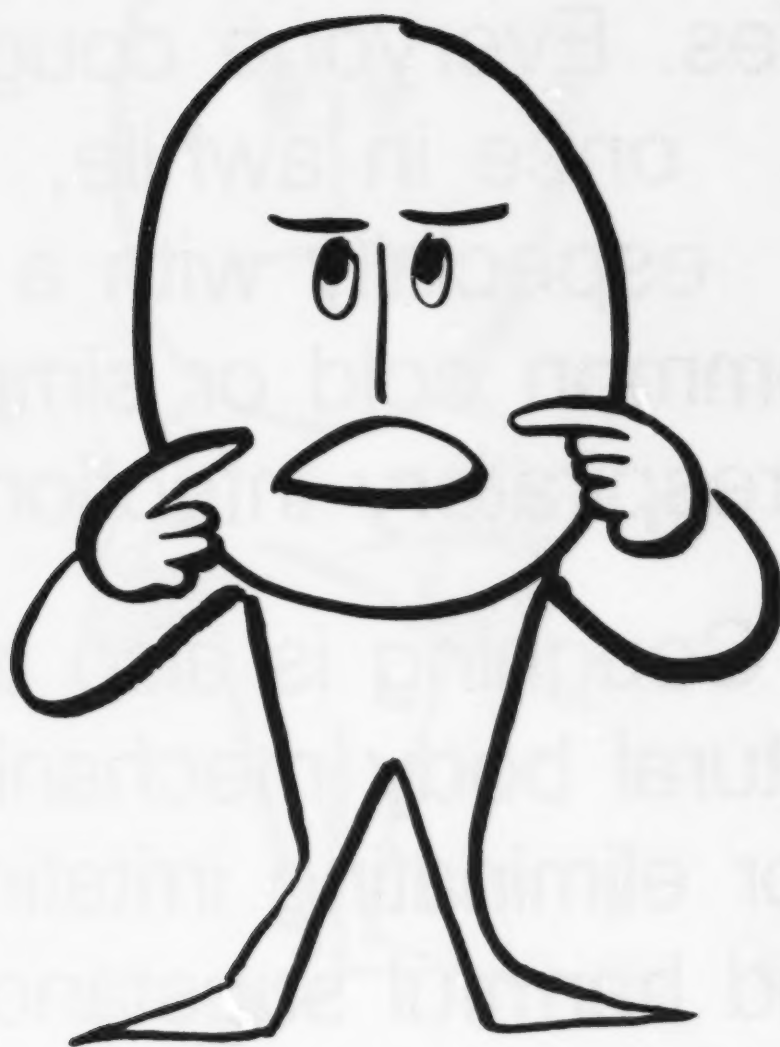
**A cough that
lasts for a
month or more.**



But doesn't everyone
cough? Isn't it
normal?

Yes. Everyone coughs
once in awhile,
especially with a
common cold or simple
respiratory infection.

Coughing is also a
natural body mechanism
for eliminating irritating
and harmful substances
from the lungs and
respiratory tract.



What Substances?

Smoke, irritating gases
and dusts, bone or food
particles lodged in the
throat, fluids that "Go
down the wrong pipe,"
and accumulations of
excess mucus.



**If coughing is normal,
why should I worry
about it?**



**Don't - unless your cough
hangs on and becomes
chronic.**

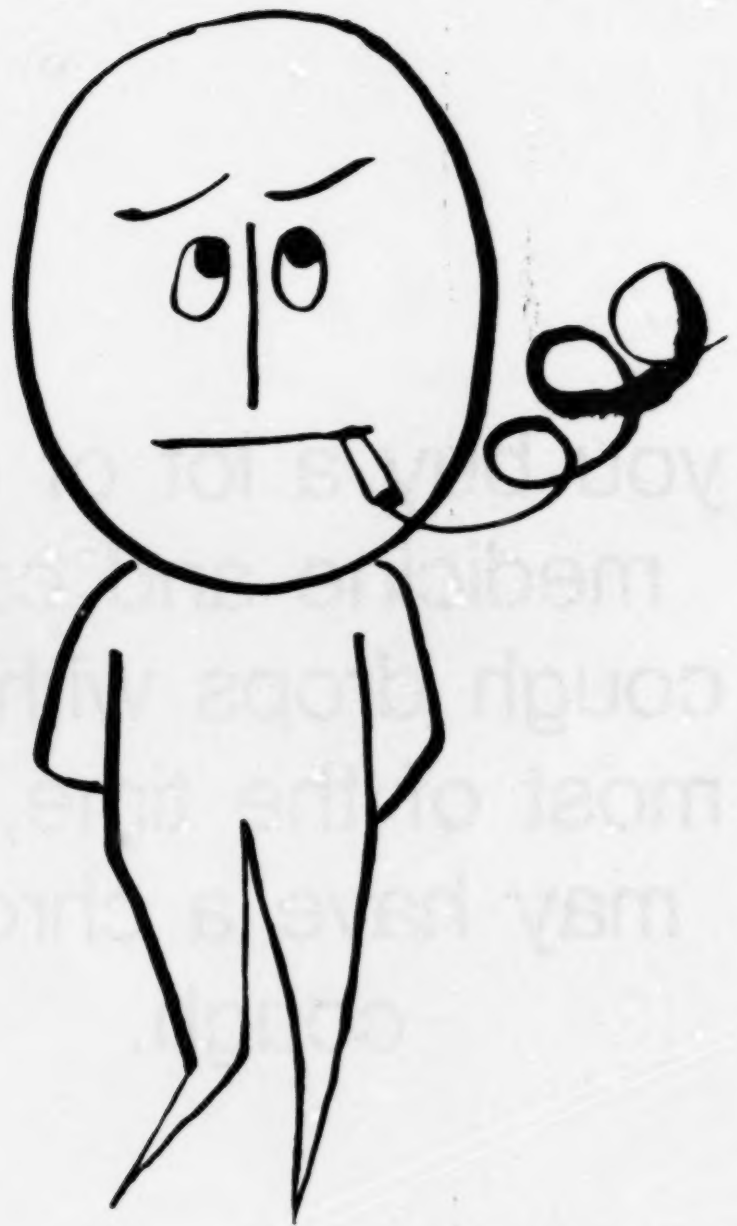
How else can I tell
if my cough is chronic?



How else can I tell
if my cough is chronic?



**If you buy a lot of cough
medicine and carry
cough drops with you
most of the time, you
may have a chronic
cough.**



I do carry cough drops
but they're only for my
cigarette cough.



Watch out!

**“Cigarette cough” and
“winter cough” can be
chronic. You should also
be suspicious of a cough
that happens frequently
when you go to bed at
night or wake up in the
morning.**



**So what if I have a
chronic cough?**

**Except for a little
discomfort, what does it
matter?**



**It may be harmless, but
it could mean that you
have a chronic lung
disease.**



What are some chronic lung diseases?

Chronic bronchitis, asthma, cystic fibrosis, emphysema, diseases caused by dust inhalation, lung cancer and tuberculosis.

Your lungs are essential for your well-being, and a chronic cough may be the most noticeable symptom of a lung disorder.



**Are there any other
symptoms?**

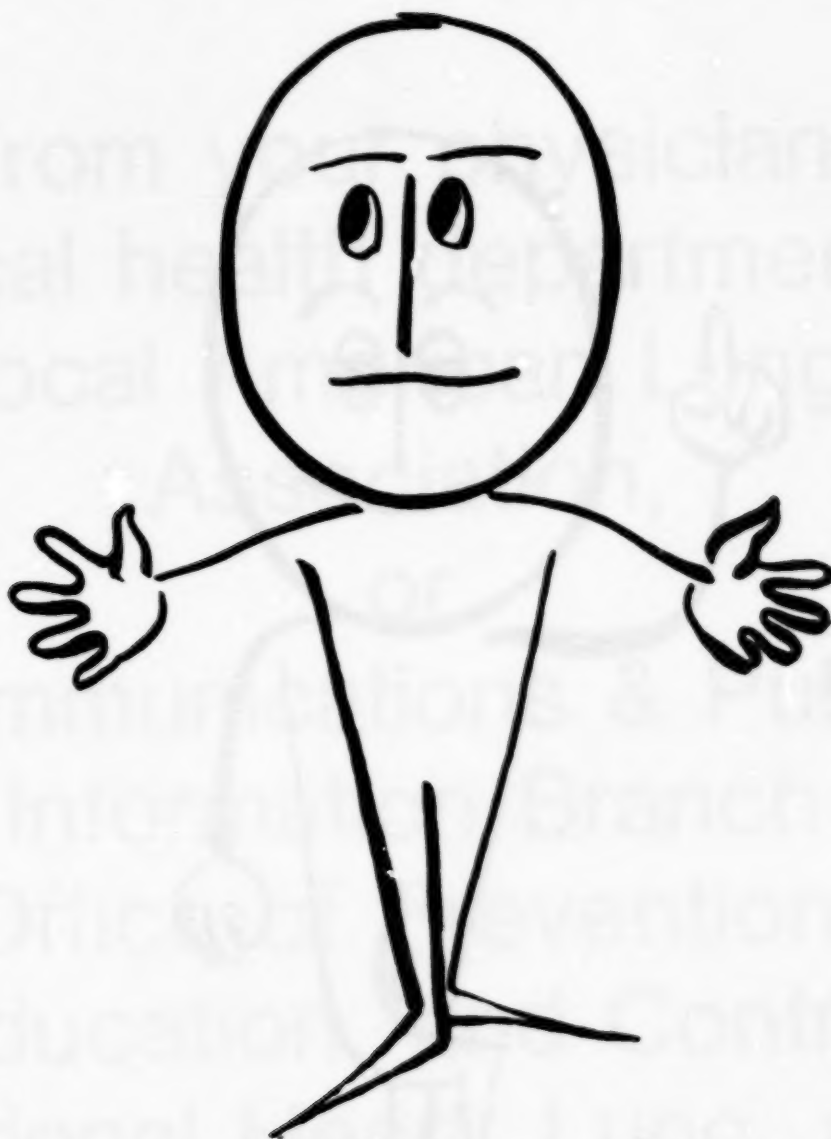
Sometimes. Even if your cough has persisted for only a short time or you have no cough at all, you should be wary of these:

Shortness of breath,
chest pain, and spitting
up blood.

SEE YOUR PHYSICIAN

O.K., I have the
message — a chronic
cough can mean danger
and shouldn't be
neglected.

So what should I do
about it?



If you think you have a
chronic cough or any
other signs of a lung
disorder

SEE YOUR PHYSICIAN



**Where can I get more
information about lung
diseases?**

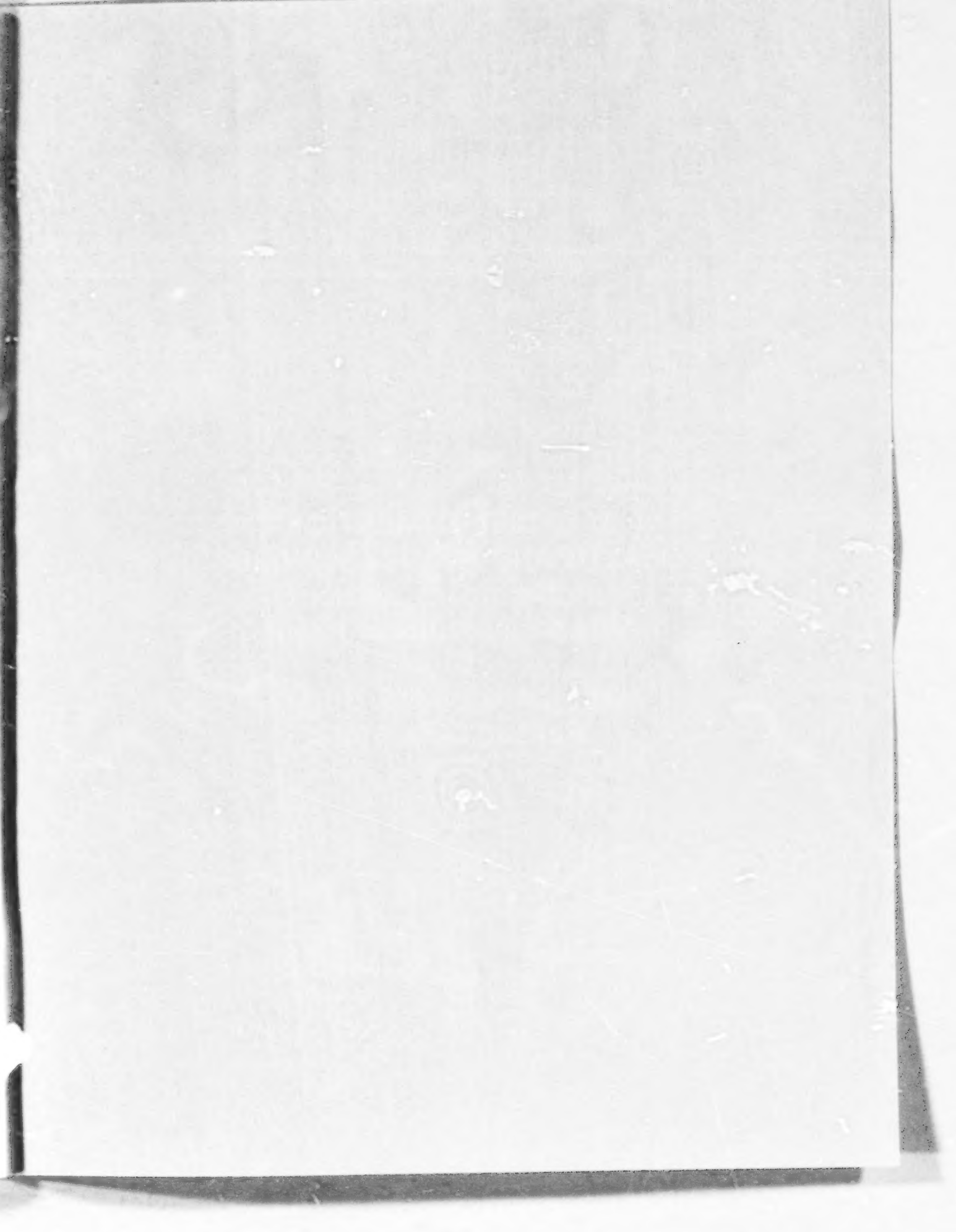
**From your physician,
local health department,
local American Lung
Association,**

or

**Communications & Public
Information Branch
Office of Prevention,
Education, and Control
National Heart, Lung, and
Blood Institute
National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland
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